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TO ONE FROM ARCADY: and other poems by: THEODORE LYNCH FITZ SIMONS

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Painting and verse by THEODORE L. FITZ SIMONS

NOCTURNE

Dark poplars that soar, shadowing the sky;
A crescent moon against the gloaming west,
Painting with path of pearl the river's breast
That 'twixt their ebon trunks doth gleaming lie.

TO
ONE FROM ARCADY

and Other Poems

BY
THEODORE L. FITZ SIMONS

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1915

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TO

ALL WHO HAVE HEARD AND
OBEYED THE CALL OF PAN

AND TO

MY FRIEND

WILLIAM MÜLLER BAYNE

(PAINTER, POET, AND MEMBER OF THE
PAVLOWA BALLET) TO WHOM I OWE MY
AWAKENING TO SELFHOOD IN BRAHM

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TO ONE FROM ARCADY

SONNET-SEQUENCE

PRELUDE

I

They say that once this sad old world was young,
When men were like to gods and knew no cares,
Nor grief, nor weariness of passing years;
When in their hands hope was a bow new-strung.
All thought of death unto the winds was flung,
For death was then as sleep; men knew not tears
Save those which spring from joy, nor of despairs,—
It was the age when sweet Apollo sung.
Imagination with unbounded flight
Soared heavenward, and Love then reigned supreme.
Fancy found nymphs and satyrs in each glade;
The seer Faith in many a tranced dream
Found revelations in the world's dawn light,
Nor of his heaven-sent visions was afraid.

II

Would that that Golden Age could come again,
And men fling off their robe, hypocrisy,
And walk in God-like innocence, and be
Like gods, unknowing sin or shame or stain;
That naught which is called knowledge should remain
Of good or evil. Then unconsciously
Would men with Nature move in harmony,—
Obey the compelling music of her strain!
Would that Prometheus with his stolen fire
From heaven had ne'er descended on the Earth,
Nor unto men the withheld mysteries taught,
Giving them thirst which was to end in dearth,
Nor in their hearts had put a wild desire,
To reach out for the Infinite through thought.

I

Sometimes I dreamed you came from Arcady,—
That you have lain upon the golden lawns
In drowsy noontides with bronze-breasted fauns,
Or mingled in their moonlight revelry,
Danced 'mid the sapphire hills which girt the sea;
That you have seen from out the reedy grass
A pearl-limbed naiad loom (with hair like brass)
Flecked by the sun and shadows' tracery!

Aye, still the forest fragrance cleaves and clings
To your brown body and your perfumed hair;
Still in your movement lurks wild woodland grace
Of wind-stirred poplars (that make leafy lair
For startled dryads when the satyr sings);
Still you bring visions of each God-loved place!

II

My yearning for you is not mean and low,
  Nor reeks it of the sloughs of dark desire,
  But is a torch that lit my soul with fire
Of Love until my heart flushed, all aglow
With a great warmth that it did never know.
  You were the passionate wind and I the lyre;
  Your sweet breath swept my chords and did inspire
Lyrics of love, and made wild words to flow.
You are the springtime of my life,— the strong,
  Sweet-scented youth,— the source of primal things,—
All things in life that I have loved and missed.—
  You, dryad-like, shall live a thousand springs,
  A thousand springs of love and youth and song.
And who could leave your lips untouched,— unkissed?

III

Candid you are, and honey-sweet withal,—
O tempting fruit that Love cannot resist,
Smelling of juicy grapes by hot suns kissed
In tropic islands where the wild vines crawl,
O'ermantling some gray Spanish mission wall
Raised high above a sea of amethyst,
Where only winds and waves keep amorous tryst
On moon-charmed nights, and softly rise and fall.

Yet ofttimes with the quivering of your lids,
Or with the sphinx-like mystery of your smile,
You hint of memories of more ancient time,—
Of moonless nights among the pyramids,
Blue lotus lilies on the gleaming Nile,—
Of golden deserts in a burning clime.

IV

Yes, I have loved and known you long ago,—
In other lands, in other lives than this;
And I have burned beneath your perfumed kiss
Within some vine-clad Spanish patio.
The white Alhambra, in the afterglow,
Shone far above dark forests,— oh, the bliss
Of that brief moment I shall ever miss,
For then you loved me,— yet, alas, I know
That now the times are changed, and I am mad;
The gods have mocked me in my latest birth,
I wear a strange disguise to hide my heart,—
They've stripped me of the beauty that I had,
And make me now the scorn of all the earth,
And set me from thy clasp now far apart.

V

You left my life a lonely, vacant room,
  Without one taper burning that could light
  The inner darkness, or dispel the night,—
Without one gleam of hope that might illume;
Yet in the empty chamber the perfume
  Of your sweet presence lingers, and your sprite
  Still lurks behind, though you are lost to sight.
I feel that you are near me in the gloom;
Why did you ever enter thus,— oh, why
  Abide so brief a space, and then depart,
  Stealing your queenly beauty from my mind,—
  The figure that shall haunt me till I die,
Leaving the desolate chamber of my heart!
O Love, dear Love, you know it was unkind!

VI

My life henceforth is pale and colorless,—
A tattered piece of tapestry once wove
In vivid hues by hands of Fate and Love,
Now wept on by the tears of blind Distress.
Though the design hath faded, one might guess
The import of strange forms that seem to move;
And one lithe figure, traced the rest above,
Though dimmed by time, hath left its strong impress.
A jocund Bacchus seems he or a faun;
Grape-clustered chaplets his dark brows entwine,
And his broad, naked shoulders;
He, forsooth,
Is one of Pan's mad revellers. The tawn
Of his brown body glows against the vine,—
O last of all my pagan dreams of youth!

VII

Thy voice is soft and luscious as the tone
Of purple shadow on an amber beach,—
So upon gleaming silence glows thy speech,
Or as the sea that storms the virgin zone
Of a walled coast until its waves are thrown
So ceaselessly they make a sudden breach
Through which its amorous arms rush in and reach
The white breast of the coast. Even so thine own
Sweet-tempting, Southern tongue hath stormed my soul,
And wave by wave each rippling syllable
Hath left its fatal imprint on my mind
Until the breach was made,— and lo, the goal
Of thy desire was thine,— the strong walls fell,—
Thine arms had clasped mine arms for which I pined.

VIII

That which is slowly wakening in you,
In vain I soothe to sleep within my soul,—
In vain I break away from all control,
From all that I had learned, from all I knew,
Of good and evil.— God, then, is it true
That you have read at last the secret scroll
Of life, and that you, too, must pay the toll
Of all who find that terrible, dark clue?
Are you awakening to a sense of sin,—
The fatal knowledge of the right from wrong,—
While I have sought to sink to sleep in vain?
Shall I not tread those paths you wandered in,—
Those care-free, woodland ways of joy and song,—
And shall you, too, be doomed to taste the pain?

IX

The weary hours of toil at last are told,—
And peace breathes, while the day in splendor dies;
In the last gleam a silent sea-tern flies
With light-reflected wings. Oh, now behold
The expanse of heaven glowing fold on fold,
Wave-mirrored where the rose-flushed water lies;
The sunset, subtle alchemist of the skies,
Turning the western clouds to burning gold!

Thus when the soul's brief pilgrimage shall end,
And we at last shall stand at the sea's marge
To bid farewell to all we love and know,—
To watch our dear sun radiant descend
Before we pass as yon mist-hidden barge,—
May life reflect such heavenly afterglow!

X

To hear your voice again, to touch your hand,
To look in your dark eyes, behold your face
(Molded by joy, where grief hath left no trace),
Yet know that you can never understand
How much I loved you, how your beauty fanned
My starved heart into passion by its grace,—
God knows I cannot bear this lonely place,
But I must follow you from land to land,
To be with you, no matter if your scorn
Pierces me to the heart,— only to be
A servant in your house, so I am near
My own belovèd, and from dusk till dawn
To wait upon you ever ceaselessly,
With sacrifice that never sheds a tear.

XI

This was my dream,— in some far Southern isle
  Crowned by dark palms, beside the turquoise sea,
  Upon the saffron sand to lie with thee,
Gazing far out to billowy mile on mile;
Betimes to watch the swift, elusive smile
  Light up your features when you turned to me,
  Or feel the warm wind playing wantonly
With your soft curls as there we dreamed the while.

Forgetful of the world,— at last set free!
  Roaming light-clad the shores, and hand in hand,
  Or mingling with the surf's broad gleaming tide,—
  We, too,— alone on that far tropic strand,—
We two made one, whom Fate should not divide,—
This was my dream. Alas, it could not be!

TO ONE FROM ARCADY

LYRIC-SEQUENCE

I

Thou art the image of my dear desires,
Sacred to all my longing after youth;
For thee alone still burn those unquenched fires
Of passion that have filled my heart with ruth.

While I, a votary at thine altar lying,
Gazing at thee, would clasp thy shining feet,
Yet know within my heart that they are dying,—
Those fires which once had warmed me with their heat.

Thou hast all that which my vain, futile yearning
Can never beckon back from the past years,—
Beauty and strength and youth within thee burning,
While I have only left the gift of tears.

II

Why did you come so late in life,—
O Love, O wild Desire;
Why came you not when the time was rife,
When youth was a burning fire?

Why came you not when the days were sweet,
O Love, O wild Desire;
When my arms were strong and my feet were fleet,
And life was a joy entire?

But you came, you came, so late,—oh, so late,—
O Love, O wild Desire;
And in vain, oh, in vain, do I curse my fate,
And call Youth back through the closing gate
With a voice that is wild and passionate
As the sound of a wind-swept lyre!

III

Liquid voice and almond eyes,
Lips that are pomegranate-red,
Supple figure serpentine,
Limbs where love's warm incense lies,
Faun-like poise of throat and head,—
Beauty that is strong as wine,—
Hath my suave, gay Argentine.

IV

If you should come and stand beside my bed
When I lie cold and breathless, free from pain;
If you stooped down and touched me, lying
dead,—
God knows my heart would throb with life again,
My body then would burn with passion's fire,
And my soul thirst with unassuaged desire.

V

To love Life less and less, yet dread Death more;
To be as one who on a lonely shore
Gazes far out to sea, where o'er the verge
A lit sail sinks athwart the shining surge;
To bid farewell to Youth, yet still endure;
To dwell in memory, yet feel the lure
And strain of passionate tides that still would urge
Thy soul to breast their billows when too late
It is to venture forth on pleasuring;
To wake in Autumn at the call of Spring,
Yet know no buds will break, or sweet birds sing;
To stand bereft of beauty and to wait
Till Death shall meet thee by the unseen gate; —
To know all this, while still remembering
How Youth sped by ere you had caught his wing,—
O God, *this* is to feel the curse of Fate.

VI

Heart to heart and hand in hand,
Love, let us wander over the world,
Now that mad Spring is abroad in the land.
Yonder, oh, yonder, her blossoms uncurled
Beckon us each, with a small white hand,
To ponder, and wander over the world,

(*The world is wide and the ways are free*
But they lead us at last, O Christ, from Thee)
To seek the trails that our childhood knew,—
The dear, dim paths that our feet have lost,—
While the prodigal Dawn scatters diamonds of dew
On the sward that in winter shone white with his frost,—
The flower-sweet paths that we ever pursue
For the dreams that have vanished and hopes that we lost!
(*Christ of my childhood's piety,*
Look down from heaven and pity me!)

For when Spring returneth, the gods return;
And Repentance' white robe of the winter is cast
From the fields; while the bodies of all things burn
With joy that is present and pain that is past
When Pan the piper with musical blast

Thrills on the reeds till they tremble at last
Where the river-quiver their semblance hath glassed
For him who hearkeneth the gods' return.
(*Christ, pale Christ, I would think on Thee,*
But Pan's mad pipes will not let me be.)

When Spring awakeneth, the gods come back
To their ancient reign on the hills and leas;
And he who searcheth, beholdeth the track
Where the satyrs have danced, and the nymphs with these,—
Where the laughing fauns all the livelong day
Pelted their mates with young buds of May,
While dryads gazed shyly from neighboring trees:
To him who believeth the gods come back.
(*Christ, dear Christ, I would none but Thee; —*
But the nymphs and fauns,— how they call to me!)

Therefore, Love, let us wander away,—
Through the glad green coasts to the opal sea
Where the shrill gulls whirl on wide wings of gray,
Where the winds rejoice in the joy of the free,
While the Tritons and Nereids gleam through the spray,
For Demeter hath found her Persephone.
(*Christ, dear Christ, I would none but Thee,—*
But, oh, the voice of Persephone!)

Heart to heart and hand in hand,
Love, let us wander over the world,
Now that wild Spring is abroad in the land,—
Yonder, oh, yonder, her blossoms unfurled.
Beckons us each, a pale, palpitant hand,
To ponder, and wander over the world.

VII

I saw the ruddy figure of the Dawn,—
A shining shape,—
Crushing the purple clouds; he seemed as one
Who treads the grape;

Wherefrom there burst, as from the grape-stained lees,
A precious wine
That flooded all the thirsting flowers and trees,—
The red sunshine.

VIII

We die in lands we leave behind:
  Through each deserted street
Our spirits wander in the wind,
  And where have trod our feet

We haunt the old familiar town;
  We tread with soundless beat
The pavement where we laugh and frown,
  And strive in vain to greet
Familiar faces to us fled,—
That know us not, *now we are dead!*

IX

Ah, Love, for an isle
Where blue heaven's smile
  Is reflected in all things round;
Where the orange blossom blows,
And the scent of the rose
  On the wandering zephyrs abound;
Where the white cloud dreams,
And the bright sunbeams
  Lie reflected in all things round; —

And thither to flee,
Far over the sea,
  To that beautiful, long-loved land
Where hope is new-strung,
And the heart free and young,
  As the terns that wing over the sand.
And never could sin
Or grief enter in
  To that beautiful long-loved land,

Nor God to perplex
Nor man come to vex,
  That beautiful islet of peace
With his white-winged sails
Set unto the gales,
  But here should all sacrilege cease.
Thus never could sin
Nor death enter in
  To that beautiful islet of peace.

Every dawn you should drink
At the fountain's cool brink,
  Like the nymphs in the legends of yore;
Where the fleet dolphins play
In the silvery spray,
  We would run on the shining seashore.
What would the world give
To live as we'd live,
  Like nymphs in the legends of yore?

Aurora should rise
In the amber-tint skies,
  With her sandaled feet set on the seas;
On rainbow wing
She should soar, and fling
  Her tresses to the wafting breeze.
And, oh, the delight
Of her swift, golden flight,
  With her perfumed breath on the seas.

And each flower should look up,
With its dew-brimming cup,
  From the fields and the smooth, green leas;
And the waving woodbine
Would gently entwine
  While it wooed with the whispering trees.
And, oh, the delight
Of morn's glorious flight
  To the blossoms and glad, green leas.

And all the day long,
With laughter and song,
  Where the live oaks linger and bend,
Would I wreathe thee with flowers
Till the shining-winged hours
  Of daylight should come to an end.
And, oh, with what love
Would we wander and rove,
  Where the live oaks linger and bend,

Till the Sunset should spread
His flushed wings overhead,
  Where the western waters lie calm,
Until at his kiss
They blush with such bliss,
  As you blush when we kiss 'neath the palm.
Then at heaven's gate
With rapture they wait,
  Rose-flushed, foam-girdled, nor calm.

Till a single faint star
Should gleam from afar,
  And the happy winged hours have end,
And Vesper should close
The day to repose,
  And the twilight of heaven descend,
And the shadows we love
Come down from above
  When the sunny-winged hours have end.

Then singing no more
On the surgeless seashore,
  We would watch the quiet-rimmed moon
Come up from the waves
Where nightly she laves
  While the winds set the ripples atune.
Thus sweetly caressed
Thou should sink on my breast
  To sleep 'neath the quiet-rimmed moon.

X

I am free at last! O God, I am free
From all I was,— that *I failed to be;*
Free from pain, and free from desire
That set my body and soul on fire;
Free from fretting, and free from regretting,
Remembering only the bliss of forgetting;
Free from this clay-built house of cares;
Free from all shadows and dark despairs
That lay siege to the soul and wait and wait,
Till Death fling wide the secret gate.
I am one at last with the oak and pine;
And the calm and the strength of the hills is
mine.
One with all fleet things that move,
One with all strong things that stand,
One with Hate and one with Love,
One with the sea, and one with the land,
One with the purple-shadowed hills,
One with the pale, dawn-gilded rills.
I have left my poor, weak body behind,
And I ride,— I ride,— on the wings of mind —
On the wings of mind that are swifter than wind.
I've left the place where I sorrowed and sinned;
As a tattered garment I flung aside
My withered form, while my soul doth ride.
My soul is set free,— it is newly risen
From the House of Breath, from its clay-built
prison;

It burst every bar and door asunder,
And God *is* revealed in His unseen wonder.
And I have forgotten the paths that I trod,
Now that my spirit is One with God!

MISCELLANEOUS

THE SONG OF DAWN

Over the crests of the hilltops I speed,
That, dreaming of olden
Days, lie asleep;
And the winds at my coming wake moorland
and mead,
Where the flash of my golden
Winged sandals shall sweep.

From the heart of the mountains, at anvil and
forge,
With deft anvils ringing,
The bearded dwarfs mold
The sandals with which over hollow and gorge
Each morn I go winging,—
Swift sandals of gold.

My wings are the shafts of the sunrise which beat
The heavens expanding
With roseate light;
I leap on the ramparts of mountains to meet
The white moon disbanding
Star legions to flight.

Lo, ere my light on their darkness did shine
(By dim shadows haunted)
I lacked not for priest;
For the pines were my prophets,— my prophet
each pine;
All night they have chanted
And bowed to the East.

I am that which the poets with rapture have
sung;
Nay, they were but rushes
That bent to my breath;
For I thrilled through their lips till they
sounded and rung
Till they wakened night's hushes,—
I am Life born of Death!

I am that for which sages of ages have pined,—
A symbol of wonder,
A presence divine;
Yet never hath ever their lore pierced behind,
To the Power that lies under
The veil of my shrine.

I pour forth my wine of sunshine on the hills,
To the valleys long-thirsting
For day's golden feast,
Till each glen laughs again with a ripple of rills,
With my golden wine bursting
The bounds of the East!

As an arrow from the archer, as an arrow from
the bow,
To the goal of Hereafter,
From the Earth to the sky;
So on through the mist of the fleet years I go
With a sound as of laughter,—
As an arrow am I.

On my wings of the sunrise I ride through the
years;
The mountains far over
I speed in glad flight;
I bring hope to the mourner, I wipe away tears,
Since the voice of Jehovah
Said, "Let there be Light."

THE SEA ENCHANTED

A FRAGMENT FROM A DREAM

I saw forsaken gardens that once crowned
Old terraces of ocean-circled isles,
Where dark-browed youths and fair-haired damsels dwelt;
But all those shapes of joy had passed away,
Blown like the blossoms of forgotten springs.
I saw pale-petaled paths now choked with leaves
Where wooing lovers wandering once had sighed,
(Where only now the winds sighed to and fro).
And when I thought of all those happy forms
That through these courts once glided to and fro,
I heard the strange voice of the dreamful surge
That through their lives they day and night had heard,
Until at last borne in upon their brains,
They two, forgetting all their joy and mirth,
Like tired children wearied with their play
Sank down with its soft murmurs in their ears
To everlasting sleep and dreamless death.
While he who cast this spell upon their lives
(Calling them alway to his hidden deeps),—
The white, foam-wrinkled wizard of the sea
That round these shores his magic circle traced,—
Chanted his wicked charms and ruthless runes
That lured these lovers all to dreamless death!

AN APRIL VIOLET

I saw a dainty, blue-gowned nun
  Bend, with a teardrop in her eye,
Over a brooklet in the sun,
  Telling her rosary.

She saintly seemed in that retreat,
  A holy, sacred presence there,
A soul by sorrow made more sweet,
  Fast wrapped in silent prayer.

MOON MAGIC

We wandered down the silver-shelving shore,
Over the shining sand;
We heard the ocean's voice, forevermore
Lulling the listless land.

Afar the broad-backed billows, steep on steep,
Reared,— war steeds white with foam;
Behind, the isle wrapped in cerulean sleep,—
Above, the weird moon clomb.

And as we watched her on her silent way,
We lost all power of speech;
The waves bowed down 'neath her entrancèd sway
To clasp the gleaming beach,

While she, strange sorceress, on the cloudless skies
Wove her mysterious spell,—
Mocked the thralled sea with smile serene and wise,
Subtler than tongue can tell!

THE SLEEPING FAUN

She sat by her belovèd while he slept;
She saw his tawny-ivory curled lids lie
Like petals of pale poppies overblown,
Deep-fringed with purple lashes whose dark screen
Soft-veiled the Spanish splendor of his eyes;
And gazing thus upon him, she could scent
The perfume of his passionate, sweet breath,
That smelled of juicy grapes by hot suns kissed
(In vineyards dear to Bacchus or to Pan,
Or like the incense that pervades strange shrines
In occult temples of the Orient),
The odor of Desire and of Love. . . .
She sat by her belovèd while he slept;
She saw his luscious lips curled full and red,
Kissing each other in voluptuous curve;
Red as pomegranate was his firm, strong mouth.
And as he lay there, his broad modeled breast,
Naked and bare, as sun-burned ivory
With olive shadows shone between the sheets,
And his strong-muscled arms, on which his head
Was pillowed in soft slumber; his black hair
Flowed back in glossy curls, and floated round
His dark, black brows, above his shadowed face. . . .

And as she watched, the deep breath came and went
Through his wide nostrils, wild and eloquent.

Her-seemed he was some faun who'd lost his
way,
Or some young satyr who had gone astray,
And now lay prisoned in the haunts of men,
Dreaming of babbling brook and mountain glen,
Within the city's cruel closing walls;
Perchance he heard the sound of waterfalls,—
How could he dream so carelessly the while?—
Lo, on his lips was set a cruel smile!

She sat by her belovèd — and she wept
To think how she had sinned for him who slept.

HAST THOU NOT GRIEF?

Hast thou not grief at turning of the leaf,
When all the year is yearning;
When Autumn walks with Midas touch of old,
Turning the thriftless forest into gold;
When through the woodland many a bush is burning
When all the corn is gathered in the sheaf,
Hast thou not grief?

Hast thou not grief at reddening of the leaf,
To hear the bluebird calling
Over the furrowed lands in lonely flight,
With mellowed notes in evening's last sweet light,
When through the wood the silent leaves are falling, falling?
To know the year is sad, his life is brief,
Hast thou not grief?

Hast thou not grief at falling of the leaf?
Hast thou not secret longing
To see the wistful sunset in the west
Flame o'er the purple hills, and dream of rest?
When golden-rod throughout the field is thronging,
When all the corn is gathered into sheaf,
Hast thou not grief?

Hast thou not grief at withering of the leaf?
When the wild woods are sighing,
Doth not regret in thee beget sad tears?
To look back on thy withered waste of years;
To know the sad old year is dying, dying;
When the winds whisper that his time is brief,
Hast thou not grief, sad heart, hast thou not
grief?

FATE

Strange it is, yet 'tis true,
Man's fate is not ruled by a star,
For whatever we think, we are;
And whatever we are, we do.

Time tames us not; we grow old
By thoughts of age, not by years.
As a river-worn rock-bed, our fears
Wear our forms into sorrowful mold.

ADORATION

What is it to have visions, to have dreams,
To hear the voices in the winds, to be
Uplifted to the prophetic ecstasy
Beneath the splendor of the bright day's beams? —
To hold communion with the hills and streams,
Or to go down in madness to the sea
To hear its anthem of eternity
Roll on the soul forever, till it seems
Filled with mysterious import? — What to hear
The spirit-stirring whispering of the pine,
To stand enchanted where the sunset waits
At close of even, worshipping the shrine
Of beauty inexpressible, in prayer,—
A moment with thy God within the gates!

THE UNSEEN SCULPTOR

There is an unseen Sculptor who hath wrought
Throughout the ages diverse forms,— sublime
And comic figures; mortals call him Time,
But to philosophers his name is Thought.

Contrasting attitudes and every sort
And cast of countenance, portraying crime
And saint-like holiness in every clime,—
Youth's smiles, grief's lines,— hath he conceived and caught;
For as the inward soul is, ever must
The outward form be,— neither more nor less
Than by Thought's ceaseless chiselling defined,—
Joy's rounded contour, hollow-eyed Distress;
Yet Sorrow's shapes shall crumble into dust
When Thought hath immortality divined.

PRAYER TO BRAHM

O THOU High Power, Brahm,— unchangeable,
Yet ever-changing,— at the loom of life
Weaving the web of being, yet with hands
That move not, nor are seen of any man,—
Teach me to lean upon thee, let me rest
My tired heart upon thy calm great breast.
Teach me to be as thou art, nor to seek
To clasp at tempting fruit beyond my reach.
Teach me to be as thou art; let me cease
To strive and fight with men for this world's gain;
Cast out desires,— petty jealousies,—
And make me One with thee, Eternal Peace,

So that, no longer seeking, I shall find
The power to do great deeds,— the strength of mind
That comes but to the mystics of this world,
So that by thee my art shall be unfurled,
And Brahm be praised through me of all mankind.

THE BALLAD OF A NUN

I

"Beneath the convent's shadowed wall,
The first time that I saw his face,
He clasped,— I broke from his embrace,—
Would God that I had given all.

"The passion hoarded in my breast,—
This passion that I still must hoard;
Oh, take this cross from me, dear Lord,
And let me lie and be at rest.

"Mother of God the Crucified,
See how my heart with love doth bleed!"
(E'en as a frail, wind-shaken reed,
She fell the Virgin's shrine beside.)

"I know, O Mother of God, I know
That earthly passion is a stain,
That I, a nun, must love in vain;
But yet, O God, I love him so!"

The day wore on to vesper song;
The black-robed sisters silent pass
Through the dim aisles at candle-mass,
And kneel there, an adoring throng.

The choir sang, the organ pealed,
The presence of the Holy Ghost
Was felt,— and lo, the sacred host
Was raised above them as they kneeled!

They tell their beads, then calmly rise,
And two and two glide to the door,—
When lo, before them on the floor
They see a stricken novice lies.

II

She lies before the Virgin's shrine,
Her white hands clasping as in prayer,
And up at them her dead eyes stare,—
When lo, behold a sacred sign!

For round her veil, above her head,
A golden halo gleams and glows,
And sheds a light of amber rose,—
" Surely, she is a saint," they said.

They touched her hands,— her hands were cold;
They marked there was nor life nor breath;
She lay there peacefully, and death
Had given her that crown of gold.

They raised her then upon a bier;
They bore her up the chapel aisle;
Her face was fixed in a calm smile;
Then at the altar left her there,

III

When suddenly, with clanking din
  Of jingling spurs and armament,
  A dark-browed youth, with travel spent,
Up through the chapel aisle rushed in!

The nuns, they break from side to side,
  And trembling, fly apart in groups,
  As when a broad-winged falcon stoops
On fluttering birds that strive to hide!

Then right up to the bier he strode
  And clasped the novice to his breast,
  And kissed her brow, her lips, and pressed
Her hands until it seemed they glowed.

"*Sancta Maria!* Shield us well,"
  The frightened abbess fainting cried,—
  "Are saints not free when they have died
From passion and the fiends of hell?"

"*Per baco corpo,*" groaned the knight;
  "My love, alas! I come too late,
  For thou hast passed the dismal gate
Where Love and Life are lost to sight."

IV

His limbs grew rigid, and he fell
  Across her form, his arm entwined
  Around the breast that once had pined
For him until Love burst its cell.

And thus a miracle was wrought: —
  For those on earth who cannot wed
  Christ joins after they are dead,
And thus Death found what Life had sought!

TO BRAHMA

A-WEARY of wandering hither and thither, the
puppet of a Fate,
I feign now would seek the Great Centre, the
source of my soul,
To become for a moment as conscious of power
and great
As Brahma,— forgetting my part in the In-
finite Whole.

Fight on, fight on with sword and shell;
Yet though you fight like fiends of hell,
There is one force you cannot quell!
A mightier than war shall come;
His hosts shall hold each plain,
And hush the rolling of the drum
Along the trampled grain,
And on the fields where men have bled
Shall not be left a stain;
The battle-bugle shall grow dumb,
And mothers smile again;
For 'neath his gaze the guns shall cease,
For lo, he is the Prince of Peace,
Who brings to each and all release,—
The slayer and the slain!

UNA ARS

I

The Poet gazeth here, and languisheth
(At the blue hills priest-kneeling in the west)
That through his song shall never be expressed
Their definite beauty, and he sighing saith,
"Ah, would my words were colors and not breath!"
The Painter hears these pines chant, nor can rest,
But cries within himself, "Oh, to suggest
With words their mystic hymn of Life and Death!"

So Art and Poesy awhile must be
Thus severed, and while severed, incomplete;
Yet aye they tend toward the self-same goal.
When after many a weary century,
As lovers who embrace, at last they meet,—
From whence the one expression of the Soul!

II

Aye, then shall heaven come on earth; aye, then
  Shall reign the thrilling thousand years of peace,
  Of grand endeavor which shall never cease,
When God's one harmony shall throb through men
From sea-girt island unto mountain-glen.

Then shall the panting spirit win release
  On rushing wings of thought from out the press
Of human bonds to regions beyond ken.
  For men shall then conform to righteousness
  In deeds, and thus their words shall grow to be
More burning e'en than prophets heretofore;
  Their lives shall be their poems, and shall bless
Their comrades with their God-like harmony
Till sin and death make discord nevermore.

This is a poet's land, and all around,
The great, cloud-dreaming mountain ranges rise
In heavenly contemplation of the skies,
In noontide meditation,— calm, profound.
Though summer, 'tis like autumn,— not a sound
Stirs in the wood save the wind's slumberous sighs,
Or when some red leaf, fluttering, falls and dies,
Lone harbinger of autumn, to the ground!

The rye is gathered into harvest sheaves,
The meadows sleep beneath dark bordering pines,—
Uplifting pines which chant continually.
A lofty land,— yet still my wild heart grieves,
And longs once more for the white breakers' lines
And the wild, restless rhythm of the sea.

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